

# Don't Ever Apologize for Your Small Business!

by Dr. Ralph F. Wilson, E-Commerce Consultant

"We're just a small business," you mumble apologetically. In this world where big seems better, small business owners have developed a strangely distorted self-image. Small feels ... well, inadequate. But small business is great business, and I'll tell you why. I want to lead a grand cheer for small business owners and employees. You, my friends, are the salt of the earth.

Now I don't want to downplay the role of big corporations. We need their economies of scale to build efficient automobiles, commercial aircraft, and a communications infrastructure. But sometimes we overlook the fact that huge businesses have serious weaknesses in areas where small businesses shine.

## Small Businesses Are the Backbone of the Economy

The US Small Business Administration says that small businesses create two of every three new jobs, produce 39% of the gross national product, and invent more than half the nation's technological innovation. And this kind of statistic could be repeated in country after country around the world. Just because you work for or run a small company doesn't mean you are unimportant. Your contribution to your country's economy is huge.

## Small Businesses Demonstrate the Essence of Political Freedom

The ability to develop and conduct your own small business is a wonderful expression of your freedom as a citizen. You may complain about government regulations, but the fact is that small businesses are less regulated than large firms. This gives small businesses the freedom to focus on what is really important -- caring for customers.

## Small Businesses Provide Better Customer Care

I'm sure you've noticed that the larger a company grows, the harder it becomes to provide good customer service. Just try to find the right person to help you on the phone in a huge corporation -- it'll drive you batty. But when you ask for the owner of a small business, chances are you'll be speaking to her or him within a few minutes. Marketers toss around buzzwords like "Customer Relationship Management (CRM)," but it's the small business not the megacorp that really excels at it. Small businesses know that their livelihood is based on their customers. Small is great for customers.

## Small Businesses Encourage the Passion Needed to Succeed

Apathy doesn't breed nearly as well in small businesses as it does in big business. Small business owners and their workers are focused and immensely proud of what they do. Small business owners are passionate about their businesses. How many employees in bureaucratic organizations can say the same?

## Small Businesses Owners Are Highly Skilled

In a small business, you have to excel at a lot of things to succeed. Small business owners and their key employees are masters of dozens of disciplines and perform their intricate balancing act like pros. So what if they wear more than one hat? Whom should we admire more -- the corporate manager or the jack-of-all-trades small business owner, whose skill-set is sharpened to a razor's edge, and who survives and succeeds and serves? My vote is with the latter.

## Small Businesses Allow Owners the Freedom to Innovate

Small business owners learn to be risk takers and innovators. Corporate employees, on the other hand, too often interpret their prime directive as keeping their jobs. Risk taking can get in the way of career-building. Innovative small businesses are prize targets of larger corporations that often find it more cost-effective to acquire than to innovate on their own.

## Small Businesses Can Change Course Rapidly

Large corporations can be adverse to change, while small businesses know that their ability to make rapid decisions and implement course corrections is their key to success. In the ocean of business, mega-corporations turn like tankers, while small businesses can zip around them with the agility of a speedboat.

## Small Businesses Can Be Quite Profitable

Small business is not a synonym for small earnings. In fact, many small businesses are extremely profitable. Their advantages of leanness, maneuverability, innovation, and customer focus mold them into steady enterprises that earn a significant return on investment year after year after year.

Being big isn't a worthy goal. But delivering top customer service, a passion for excellence, a willingness to dream and create, and the freedom to make timely decisions -- these are worthy of acclaim.

Small businessperson, I salute you for your dedication, your intelligence, your business acumen, and your contribution to society. Be proud of your small business. Stand tall, free, ... and unapologetic. Don't offer excuses for the size of your business. Small businesses make the very biggest impact of all!

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